

THE CORRESPONDENT.

MAGNA EST VERITAS ET PREVALEBIT.

BY GEORGE HOUSTON, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

No. 9.

NEW-YORK, MARCH 21, 1829.

VOL. 5.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Extract, on the ancient notices of the Jewish nation previous to the time of Alexander the Great; from Daniel Wytttenbach's Opuscula, Vol. II. p. 416. Amsterdam, 1821. De unitate Dei.

But there were (it is said) many wise men among the Egyptians and Phenicians, who judged of divine things more accurately than the common people. I know it. And these wise men it is also said, received their knowledge of the one God from the Jews, and transmitted it to the Greeks. Of this I have no proof. Men, naturally of capacity so good, as to understand and despise the popular errors, might with the same capacity easily comprehend, what nature has certainly not placed among her recondite truths; that the divine power was rather concentrated in one deity, than divided among many. This may be affirmed of the wise men of Greece, as well as those of Egypt and Phenicia. Unless we deem them inferior in natural talent to many men of the middle ages, who could not assent to the errors of established, theology however consecrated by authority.

But I will undertake to shew, that *the Jews first came into notice among the Greeks, after the time of Alexander the Great; and that the historical monuments preceding that period make not the slightest mention of any Jewish transaction.* Many of the Greeks, their chief men for learning and talent, Thales, Solon, Pythagoras, Democritus, Plato, led by the love of wisdom, visited remote countries as Egypt, Phenicia, and Babylon. How happens it that the writings of these eminent men, the accounts transmitted to us of their sayings and doings, contain no mention of the Jews whatever? The times of Thales, Solon, and Pythagoras, are coincident with the re-instatement of the Jews after the Babylonish captivity. At that period, Cyrus subdued Cræsus and the Lydians; transactions which were nearly connected with the affairs of Greece: so that it is hardly possible the deeds and expeditions of Cyrus should have been unknown to the Greeks, especially to their sages who travelled over that part of Asia. If therefore at that period, the Jews had any name or reputation among other nations, would not Solon and the other wise men whom we have mentioned, inflamed as they were with the love of letters, have visited Judæa, as well as Egypt and Chaldea? Would not Homer, the cotemporary of Solomon, the most famous among the Jewish kings

for wisdom and knowledge—would not Homer, the most learned of poets, who had collected by travelling so much knowledge of foreign and remote nations, and who has noticed in his poems so many things that fell under his own observation, or which were told him by others—who not unfrequently mentions the Egyptians and Phenicians; would not he notice the Jewish people? Yet he mentions nothing whatever concerning the Jews. Those who believe in the personal meeting of Pythagoras and Ezechiel, commit a shameful chronological error; and bring together persons separated by many years: others believe that Plato acquired a knowledge of the trinity from the sacred books of the old testament: but nothing can be more silly than this attempt to trace Grecian learning from Judea: and those who know the least of this subject, are the most hardy in their assertions.

Let us dismiss the poets, most of whom abounded in learning, and shew it in their writings; but none of whom furnish the least trace of evidence respecting the Jews. Let us dismiss the followers of that day, of whom the writings of Aristotle and Plato, the chief of them, have reached our times: is there one Jewish notice to be found in any part of them? Yet Plato travelled into Egypt for the sake of knowledge. Aristotle also, so well versed in the history of the times, so enquiring, who had not only Alexander himself as his correspondent, but those also who were companions of Alexander's expedition, and who communicated to him whatever was worthy of notice in foreign countries and among foreign nations. If therefore any of them had visited the Jews, or considered that nation who worshipped one god only, as a circumstance new and proper to be related, would not some of them have communicated this fact to Aristotle? There was room enough to notice the Jews, in the works of that philosopher who has described the public transactions of the Greeks, and of other nations. But there is no mention of the Jews in any part of the works of Aristotle that have come down to us, or in the fragments of such as have been lost.

Let us review the historians, who have touched upon the public affairs of the Egyptians, Persians and other nations connected with them. Out of a great number, two only, but of great repute, have descended to us, Herodotus and Xenophon. The former carefully travelled over these countries, and diligently mentions whatever he had observed personally, or had heard from others. The other in the course of his military expedition was well acquainted with Persia, and that part of Asia, which was in the immediate vicinity of Judea: which of these historians, has made any mention of the Jews? We may make the same enquiry as to Ctesias, Eudoxus, and others, whose works are lost. Of the truth of this remark, one argument and that conclusive, is, that Josephus, and after Josephus, Clemens Alexandrinus, Eusebius, and the other ancient fathers, who have anxiously collected from the Greek writers whatever testimonies are extant concerning the Jews, have not been able to adduce one passage authentic or worthy of credit. I shall speak again of this, after having noticed the writers of the age of Alexander. For my former suggestion that the Jews were first noticed by the Greeks after that period, has not the same force as if the Jews suddenly at that time acquired a name among the Greeks. So in fact it was. For slight and

obscure was the knowledge of the Jews among the Greeks, until their country was frequently visited in consequence of the wars between the Ptolemies and the Seleucidæ, and colonies were transported into Egypt and Syria.

All the historians of the transactions of Alexander who are worthy of any credit, are totally silent as to the Jews. Yet this was the time and the occasion, when the Greeks might have put an end to their long ignorance, and acquired some knowledge of that people. Alexander, having taken Syria, and sacked Tyre, went toward Egypt. He passed through Palestine, whose city Gaza garrisoned by the Persians, alone made any opposition to his progress. Therefore *having passed through Judea*, and having been retarded in his passage by the necessity of taking Gaza, so little did he think of the Jews, that his thoughts were exclusively occupied by the capture of Gaza, and his intended occupation of Egypt. For as to the story related by Josephus, and those who copied him, of the visit of Alexander to Jerusalem, it can easily be shewn to be a Jewish fabrication, in consequence of the chagrin of the Jews that no mention is made of them. This is acknowledged by all the best critics on history, and in particular it has been demonstrated by the diligence of the Marquis de St. Croix, in his *Examen critique des historiens d' Alexandre le grand*, p. 68 et seq., et not. 13. It must be strange to every body but a Jew, that no mention is made of that nation by the writers who have recorded the transactions of Alexander the Great, when the barbarous and before unheard of names of the Dahæ, Aspîi, Malli, Sabracæ, Arachosii, are met with! The Jews, it may be said, voluntarily submitted to Alexander, that no force might be used against them; nor did he do any thing that his historians thought it necessary to relate in this respect. Yet, the same historians do not pass over in silence the other nations who submitted; but speak of their character, manners, and history. The truth is, there was no occasion given to speak of the Jews in the histories of Alexander. Yet he had as his companions in arms, not a few learned and philosophic men, who whatever they might have known concerning the Jews, do not appear to have communicated it to Aristotle or any other philosopher of that day. Since then, I appear to have in support of this opinion, the strong argument, that Josephus could adduce no authentic and credible passage when he wished to shew that the Jews were known to the Greeks; let us examine its value somewhat more minutely.

Apion, the grammarian, had asserted the recent appearance of the Jews, alledging that their very name was recent and unheard of among other nations; nor had many centuries passed since the ignorance of the existence of the Jews was general. Josephus undertook to refute this calumny in two books; and a great part of his observations are levelled at the negligence, and the recent standing of the Greeks themselves; and in collecting passages from the Greek writers, wherein the Jews were mentioned. It is not my business here, to discuss whether he had reason to complain of the recent standing and the negligence of the Greeks. But thus the fact is; if faith be given to the evidence of the writers cited for this purpose by Josephus, he proves nothing, unless some Greek prior to the time of Alexander, had received some slight and

obscure knowledge of the Jews, and this knowledge had been brought home to the Greeks, *after* the Jewish territory had been much frequented during the wars between the Ptolemies and the Seleucidæ. His evidences are such as may be well contested.

And first, he mentions l. i. 22, that *Pythagoras* took many of his institutions and doctrines from the Jews. But as no writing of *Pythagoras* is extant, by which this can be proved, he cites *Hermippus*, a celebrated author of the history of philosophy, but long after *Alexander*. See *Vossius de hist. Græc.* l. 16. What says *Hermippus*? "*Pythagoras* imitated the opinions of the Jews, and the *Thracians*." Now this is a conjecture of *Hermippus* who had some knowledge of the Jews, rather than a fact drawn from the works of writers, who lived near the time of *Pythagoras*, or previous to *Alexander*. For among these writers, no mention whatever is made of the Jews. Nor does *Hermippus* say that *Pythagoras* himself was ever among the Jews. Had he made such an assertion, it would surely have been brought forward by *Josephus* instead of relying on a doubtful and obscure passage. *Hermippus* had opportunity enough of saying this had it been true, since he occupied several books with the life and doctrines of *Pythagoras*.

On this authority do all the ancient fathers rely, who contend that *Pythagoras* had visited *Judea*. So, *Origen* against *Celsus* I, 15, 16, was deceived in this respect, thinking that the passage of *Hermippus* lauded by *Josephus*, was taken from the first book *Peri ton Pythagorou biblion*. As *Hermippus* joins the *Thracians* with the Jews, and insinuates that their doctrines were similar, why might not the Greeks learn the unity of God from the *Thracians* their neighbors whom they knew, rather than from the obscure and unnoticed Jews whom they knew not; if indeed the Greeks were incapable of discovering this truth by their own ingenuity? For, as *Herodotus* tells us IV. 94, *Zamolxis* was worshipped as the deity of the *Thracians*, by some horrid kind of sacrifice. The common opinion among them was, that the soul after the death of the body, returned to God; nor did they believe that the *Jupiter* who sent lightning and thunder from the skies was God: yet they held that there was no other *Zamolxis* whom they worshipped.

A few words more as to *Pythagoras*. There are two Greek writers who are of opinion that he was acquainted with the Jews: *Hermippus*, of whom I have already spoken, and *Porphyry* in his life of *Pythagoras*, ch. 16. "They say, that *Pythagoras* visited the Egyptians, Arabians, Chaldeans, and Hebrews." But the passage is of dubious authority; for *Cyrill*, in his reply to *Julian* X. p. 340, cites this very passage, omitting the words *kai Ebraious*, which the fathers who praise the Jews at the expense of the Greeks, *insert!* add also that the word *phesin* "they say" shews that *Porphyry* referred to that story-teller *Diogenes*, whose books *Peri ton uper thoulén apiston* were reviewed by *Photius* in his *Bibliotheca* Cod. 166, p. 184, et seq.

Josephus afterwards praises *Theophrastus*, who says that the *Tyrians* had the oath called *Corban*; as having named the *Tyrians* for or in lieu of the Jews. But if it be true, as *Josephus* asserts, that the Jews alone had that oath in use, it follows that very little indeed was known of the Jews, if *Theophrastus* could mistake them for *Tyrians*. Nor do I see any improbability in the *Tyrians* using the same

oath by the same name. But what is most extraordinary is, that Josephus should refer to this obscure passage in Theophrastus, and omit a plainer one, which Eusebius has noted in his *Præp. Evang.* IX. 2, citing an oration of Porphyry de Abstinens II. 26, as if the passage were taken from Theophrastus. The passage is thus corrupted in Porphyry, *Kaitoi Suron men Ioudaioi dia ten ex arches thusian eti kai nun phesin o Theophrastos zoothutoun ei ton auton (tropon) emas keleuoien thuein apostaien an tes praxeos*; neither is the reading more satisfactory in Eusebius. If therefore any one should assert that the mention of Theophrastus is inserted there from any other book, he will assert that which is improbable; especially as it is omitted by Josephus, who anxiously searched for traces of the Jews among other authors. But let it be granted that Theophrastus does mention the Jews; he speaks of them as if his knowledge of them was very slight, and by no means proposes them as examples to be imitated.

The third author mentioned by Josephus, is *Herodotus* II. 104, where he speaks of circumcision, "the Phenicians and the Syrians of Palestine acknowledge that they imitated the Egyptians in this respect: but the Syrians who dwell near the rivers Thermodon and Parthenion, and the Macrones, their neighbors, are said to have recently borrowed this rite from Colchis." To this passage Josephus adds his own opinion, viz. "that of the inhabitants of Palestine, the Jews, were the only people who used circumcision." But the Syrians of Palestine, are not called *Jews* by Herodotus: they were the inhabitants of the sea coast from Tyre to Egypt, as Wesseling ad. h. l. et III. 4, has well observed, who adds, "I cannot discover that Herodotus had any familiar knowledge of the Jews. He did not neglect the Phenicians or the Syrians of Palestine; and he notices those who had possession of the sea coast, as the Philistines; but it is not likely that they practised the ceremony of circumcision."

That Herodotus meant the Jews by his expressions above mentioned, is quite improbable; for he appears to have been ignorant of their name, and notices the rite of circumcision as something worthy of remark.

Fourthly, *Chærilus* is brought forward; who places among the nations accompanying Xerxes in his expedition, a cohort which he thus describes. "A strange kind of people followed the camp, who spake the Phenician language with an unknown accent. They inhabit the mountains of Solyma near a vast lake." Josephus is greatly mistaken when he applies this to the Jews and the lake Asphaltites. The *montes Solymi*, are mentioned by poets and historians as being situated in Lycia. Homer locates them beyond the ocean; this Strabo I. p. 39, explains: and if any one will take the trouble of comparing his explanation with these verses, he will not hesitate to allow that Chærilus alluded to the *Solymi montes* in Lycia; and means to describe their situation in conformity with Homer. But it is unnecessary for me to say any more after the remarks of such men as Scaliger and Bochart, who receive the praises of the editor of Josephus in his notes.

Josephus goes on to other authors, from whom he pretends to shew, not only that the Jews were known to other nations, but received from them praises for their wisdom. For this purpose *Aristotle* is cited! A great author no doubt. In what book, I ask, in what passage? By Clearchus truly, who introduces him in a dialogue speaking of some wise

men, a Jew, of his nation and country. Indeed it is very unlikely that Clearchus should be the author of that passage, as John Jonsius (*de Scriptoribus Hist. Phil.* I. 18) very learnedly shew. At any rate, it is a rash imputation to Aristotle himself, of that which Clearchus *feigned in the way of dialogue*; and which was never written or spoken by Aristotle. But the fathers of the church according to their usual practice, follow Josephus in this quotation also; and every where boast that the wisdom of the Jews had been praised by Aristotle. Even many recent authors, rashly use this authority. How well skilled they were in historical criticism will appear from this, that the same compositions make Aristotle himself to have been a Jew! For it is hardly credible though true, that a learned man like Marcellus Ticinus (*de Christ. Relig.* cap. 26) should publish this passage. "Clearchus, a peripatetic, writes that Aristotle was a Jew!" Carelessness was the source of this shameful mistake, for he misunderstood the Latin version of Josephus, and corrupted it by a false punctuation. The Greek runs thus, "*and this man (says Aristotle) was a Jew:*" Ticinus reads it, *and, says he, Aristotle was a Jew.* See Jonsius, I. c. p. 116. Palestine indeed, and the dead sea, as Jonsius observes, are mentioned by Aristotle in his *Meteorology* II. 3, but the Jews are mentioned no where in the works of Aristotle.

All the other authors cited by Josephus, *are subsequent to the time of Alexander*; and therefore require little notice on my part. He ascribes much to Hecataeus, who greatly praises the Jews. He is grievously offended with Hieronymus, who although he was Quæstor in Syria, and remained a long time in those parts, he does not speak one word about the Jews: notwithstanding he was a learned man, and an historian of Alexander's successors; a portion of history in which the Jews might have been introduced with great propriety. A crowd of authors, follow, who have mentioned the Jews incidentally, of these authors the names only are mentioned, the passages are not quoted, Theophilus, Mnaseas, Aristophanes, Eumerus, Hermogenes, Conon, Zopyrion: for I have not searched (says he) in all the books. Of these, some are written after the time of Alexander; others are so entirely unknown, that oblivion would have seized upon their names, had they not been rescued by Josephus. If he could have gained any credit to his nation from the testimonies which these authors might have furnished, he would have used them for this purpose, as he did others of a very obscure and dubious character. The authors who have written on the affairs of Phœnicia, Dios, Menander, are of uncertain authority. Nor does Manetho say any thing that certainly relates to the Jews. Finally (II. 16) when he attempts to shew that Moses was superior to the Greek philosophers, he adds, "Moses and the wise men of Greece held the same sentiments as to the divine nature; which they learned from Moses." Afterwards, explaining the Jewish notions of the divine nature, he uses the orphic language, God first, God middle, &c., *cet. adumbr. conf.* II. 22.

If then Josephus, a learned man and a Jew, sedulously bent upon this question, that he might vindicate for his nation antiquity and celebrity with other nations, could make out nothing to the purpose, why should I dwell on the ecclesiastical fathers, not unlearned indeed, but in

this respect independent of the authority of Josephus? If Josephus be compared with the writers who succeeded him in the same course of investigation, he well deserves the praise of modesty. He merely assumes that the Jewish name and reputation was not confined to the Jewish nation, but was known to other and foreign nations. His authority to this point would have been confirmed, if reliance could be placed on his arguments and citations. But they prove nothing in support of his position, that the name, the religion, and the rites of the Jews were generally known abroad. The ecclesiastical fathers without adducing any arguments or authorities of their own, rest upon Josephus; and assert roundly that the Greeks borrowed their notions of God from the Jews. More modern ecclesiastical authors, without knowing any reason for their position, defend it equally as if it were self-evident. Hence, rashness of judgment keeps pace with ignorance. Hence the source of those errors, by which many not unlearned men have been deceived; which would not have been the case, had they applied more diligence in the examination.

My object in this investigation has been, not to bring the Jewish nation into contempt, as some have endeavored; but simply to shew, that either no knowledge, or knowledge very slight of the Jewish nation, existed among other nations foreign to them, previous to the time of Alexander the Great. Let us now quit this digression, &c., &c., p. 431.*

* Alexander the Great died 323 years before the birth of Christ, aged 32 years.

Theophrastus died about 388 years before the birth of Christ, aged 85.

Aristotle died 322 years before the birth of Christ, aged 63.

Pythagoras died 497 years before the birth of Christ, aged 71.

Ezekiel, the prophet, flourished about 593 years before the birth of Christ.

Plato died 348 years before the birth of Christ, aged 81.

Manetho is supposed to have written 261 years before the birth of Christ.

The Jews first became known under Ptolemy Lagus, who overran that coast of the Mediterranean; and when the rage for making collections of books and literature took place, at the new built city of Alexandria. Previous to the collection of Jewish and Chaldean tracts then made, and translated by the Jew translators of the Septuagint, no mention can be found in any ancient author of any of the books in the collection now called the old testament, or of any of the facts related in them. If any ancient author of credit or respectability has mentioned, or cited, or referred to them, who is he, and where is the passage? They come to us absolutely unaccredited, in any way known to history. The Jews were a wandering tribe of Bedouin Arabs, who got possession of the sterile country contained within two degrees of north latitude, viz. from 31 to 33, and two degrees of east longitude, (from Greenwich) viz. 35 to 37. Of this they did not occupy the more fertile parts on the sea coast, but the interior and sterile portion only. Their territory, if any they had, does not appear to have been at any time larger than the little state of Delaware, and certainly not containing more good land. None of the pieces composing the old testament could have been known, till these slaves learned a little reading and writing in Babylon. After all, who will answer this question—Where is the authority for them? Upon what evidence anterior to Ptolemy Philadelphus, or about 250 years before the birth of Christ, does the authenticity of these books rest? Are the compilers employed by that monarch, (none of them known to the learned world) authority for facts related as having happened a thousand years before?

PRIEST TO THE DOCTOR.

So, doctor, you are beginning to cry "*To triumphe.*" Do not be in such a hurry, doctor. Take a little time, there is time enough for that yet.

You complain first of my inattention to those principles to which you say that you in a particular manner directed me. Now I shall look over our first letter and see what principles I have neglected. You there object to Christianity, that it is not universal. This objection I have answered. You secondly object that Christianity produced no revolution that tended to improve the condition of mankind. To this also I have replied. You next refer to certain events recorded in scripture which you think unworthy of credit; such as the miracle of the sun standing still, &c. These, indeed, I have not scrutinized—not however, because that I thought they affected the truth of the Christian religion. It was my opinion, formed from the little experience which I have had in controversy, that a discussion cannot be limited to too narrow a compass. At the close of my last letter, therefore, I set before you for this purpose, what I considered it necessary for you to do before you could overthrow Christianity.

To do you justice, you have in your last letter attempted to do something to the point. What has the miracle of the sun standing still, or that of the downfall of the walls of Jericho, or even the history of the expulsion of the Canaanites; what have these to do with the grand question, whether Jesus and his apostles were impostors. Suppose, now, that you could prove that the sun never stood still—that the walls of Jericho never fell down—that the Canaanites were never expelled by divine command, you would no doubt prove that the historian who narrates these events was misinformed with respect to these particular events; but you would not prove that the doctrines of Jesus formed no revelation from heaven. I do not however deny the event referred to. I must have something more than mere assertion, doctor, to convince me of their fabulousness. With respect to the first---namely, the miracle of the sun standing still, there might, for any thing we can tell, have been other purposes to serve by the miracle in the economy of nature, besides that of assisting Joshua. Though the event took place on the exclamation of Joshua, still it might have been designed for important purposes in conjunction with the one mentioned. Surely you will not laugh at me for pleading our ignorance of the mighty mechanism of nature: did you know all that is necessary for the regulation of the vast machine, you might; but I hope that it is saying nothing derogatory to say, that you do not.

With respect to the second, namely, the downfall of the walls of Jericho, I presume, that it is the sound of the rams' horns ringing in your ears, that sets you a laughing. But in the original, there is no word corresponding to the expression "rams' horns." It should have been translated trumpets of the Jubilee. I am willing to prove this to your satisfaction at any time.

With respect to the expulsion of the Canaanites, I would observe, 1st. that it cannot be denied that God has a right to punish. If he has not the right of punishing, his law is without authority, his moral government is without stability; and if it be allowed that God has the right of

punishing nations and individuals, who can presume to dictate to him the quantity of it. If his providence commissions the earthquake to swallow, the volcano to bury, the pestilence to ravage, the inundation to overwhelm men, women, and children, who can impeach his wisdom. But it may be the kind of calamity inflicted on a people that is the ground of objection. Had God involved the Canaanites in earthquake, or overwhelmed them in an inundation, it may be said there would be no complaint; but it is the circumstance of his employing their fellow creatures for their destruction, to which objection is principally made; to which it may be replied, that there are cases in which killing is considered no murder. Nobody thinks of calling the executioner a murderer, who hangs a murderer. A law may be suspended by the divine law-giver, in extreme cases, in which the suspension of it is necessary. Though God gave the law, "Thou shalt not kill," yet this law was to be suspended in the case of the execution of the murderer. The executioner who put the murderer to death was not considered a transgressor of the law, "thou shalt not kill." Now, the same authority which could suspend this law in the execution of a murderer might suspend it in the case of the execution of the wicked Canaanites. If the Jews, in destroying the Canaanites, were the divine executioners, inflicting, by his authority, his judgment on them for their tremendous iniquities and abominations, and thus exhibiting to themselves, to all nations, and to all generations, an example of God's abhorrence of these iniquities and abominations; if they were his commissioned executioners in this respect, then were they just as innocent of murder as the executioner of the state in inflicting death on the criminal.

After giving your thrust at the old testament, you proceed to pass one at the new, and the subject of Demoniacs does not escape your notice. Now, you ought to know, that many believers in Christianity consider the Demoniacs of the new testament as nothing more than madmen, or epileptics, and think that as it was the custom of the age, to ascribe the diseases of the lunatics, or the epileptics, to demoniacal possession. Jesus, in speaking of these unfortunate beings, uses the popular language concerning them. Farmer who writes so ably on miracles, also writes very learnedly in defence of this hypothesis. Priestly defends another hypothesis, if I mistake not, namely, that the causes of the diseases of those persons did not form a part of the revelation of Jesus, any more than the Newtonian system of astronomy. Now, surely, it will be too much to expect of me the investigation of this subject. Yet, I may remark, that though you should prove the hypothesis of the two theologians I have mentioned, both wrong, yet you would find it a hard matter I think, to prove the impossibility of the existence of the imaginary beings of which you speak. Impossibility is a big word, and I would find it too big for my utterance on such a question.

You next ridicule Christ's temptation on the mountain. Here again, I would bid you be cautious, least you "do err not knowing the scriptures." Many theologians do not understand this transaction in its literal sense; but consider it merely as a scenical representation, exhibited to the mind of Jesus, for the purpose of preparing him for those temptations

to abuse his ministry, to the purposes of ambition which he was to encounter in the course of his ministry.

On the subject of the miraculous conception, you write with a warmth bordering on the enthusiastic temperature. This is another question on which even Christians are divided—many Christians deny it. For my part, I see nothing irrational in the doctrine of the miraculous conception. Is the creation of a body in a different manner from the ordinary course of generation incredible? This is all that is implied in the doctrine of the miraculous conception, and surely there is nothing absurd in that.

You next bring, as an objection against the account we have of the darkness which took place at the crucifixion, the circumstance that it is not mentioned by the Roman historians. Now, 1st. I observe, that the word *earth* is a mistranslation—that *land* is the proper translation of the original word—namely, the land of Judea. The word is so translated in Matt. chap. xxvi. ver. 45; 2d. the darkness does not seem to have been very intense. Jesus notwithstanding the darkness could from the cross discern his mother and the apostle John. It might have been only a sort of mist. 3d. You should not expect any Roman historian to mention it, unless you could shew that he would have thought it worth while to mention it, or that it would have come in his way to mention it, or that his prejudices against Christianity would have allowed him to mention it.

I now return to your last epistle. You begin it with the subject of Christ's ascension to heaven. You say that Matthew never alludes to such an event. But there might be other causes for the omission than a doubt of the fact. The fact he could not doubt if he believed in the resurrection of Jesus; for where could he suppose Jesus to be if not in heaven.

You also say, that John never says any thing of the event in question. But John records discourses of our lord that allude to his removal from the world; which he would not have done if he had not believed it. See John, chap. xiii. v. 3, chap. xiv. v. 1, 2, 3. In chap. xx. ver. 17, we are informed, that Jesus said to Mary after his resurrection, "Touch me not for I am not yet ascended to my father, but go to my brethren and say to them, I ascend unto my father and your father, and to my God and your God." John, chap. vii. ver. 39, may also be considered an allusion to the event. You say, that Mark and Luke are the only writers who pretend to give an account of the event. Does not Paul refer to it? See Ephesians, chap. iv. ver. 10, chap. i. v. 20. Does not Peter refer to it? See Acts, chap. iiii. ver. 21, chap. ii. v. 33, chap. v. v. 31. Does not Stephen acknowledge the ascension of Jesus? See Acts, chap. vii. ver. 56.

You say, that Mark represents the event as having taken place at Jerusalem; and that Luke again represents it as having taken place at Bethany. Where does Mark say that Jesus ascended at Jerusalem. I, in vain, look for the passage. Besides, where did you learn that Bethany was many miles distant from Jerusalem. You say nothing to prove that Bethany was not "nigh unto Jerusalem about fifteen furlongs off."

But you think, that it devolves upon me to explain in "what manner Jesus lost the gravity of his body, so as to escape from the earth." Indeed! as well might one who had never before heard of the ascension of that large massy body that goes under the name of a balloon, tell the narra-

tor of such an occurrence, that it devolved on him to shew how such a large body, with a man besides attached to it, could lose its gravity. Such might be as gravely made as yours. I hope you will keep *your* gravity, doctor, when I talk about the balloon, and that you will remember there is no argument in a laugh. Whatever you may think of the analogy, I think you can hardly deny that the great power that upholds universal nature was abundantly competent to bear Jesus from the earth.

From the subject of the ascension of Jesus, you proceed to that of his resurrection. You first object, that no one is said to have seen Jesus in the act of rising from the tomb. What of that? (though at the same time I must say, that the guards must have seen him) But what though no one saw the act of resurrection, it was surely quite sufficient for all the purposes of proof, with respect to his resurrection, that he was seen by a sufficient number of competent and honest witnesses for a sufficient length of time after he had risen from the dead. It is not to the purpose at all to ask whether they saw him rise from the dead.

You next seek to invalidate the truth of their testimony with respect to the resurrection of the dead, by referring to the declaration of Jesus, that he was to be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. Now is it not more likely, that this was a peculiarity of language intelligible enough to the people to whom it was addressed, than that it was an inconsistency. For, if it be an inconsistency, how should it escape the wary eye of an impostor. Would it not have been so glaring a one that an impostor, anxious as he would be to avoid inconsistencies, would, in a moment, detect and reject; and if, therefore, we found it in his writings would not the very circumstance of its occurrence in his writings be a presumptive evidence that it was no inconsistency.

Secondly, that the expression we are considering was a peculiarity intelligible to the Jews, is farther evident from the occurrence of the same expression in Esther, chap. iv. ver. 16, where Esther declares, that she will fast with her people three days, night and day, yet we find her, chap. v. ver. 1—4, on the third day at a banquet with the king. That expression so common in Scotland, "this day eight days," is quite unintelligible to an Englishman accustomed to the expression "this day se'-night." If he do allow it any meaning at all, he considers that it denotes a day more than a week; though we use the expression to denote only a week.

But, thirdly, though you did prove the expression we have been considering, to be an inconsistency, still I would say that you did nothing to affect the grand question—Were Jesus and his Apostles honest in their testimony, and were the doctrines which they taught a revelation from heaven? If you proved the expression an inconsistency, you would no doubt prove that an evangelist, or a transcriber of the evangelist, made a slight mistake relative to a matter of no importance—a small mistake with respect to an expression used by Jesus—but you would not, I repeat it, at all affect the grand question.

You next notice what you consider another inconsistency; namely, the assertion of one evangelist, that the women came to the sepulchre at the rising of the sun, and the assertion of another, that Mary came to the sepulchre when it was yet dark. Now the former is speaking of the time when the women arrived at the sepulchre—the latter speaks of the

time when Mary left her house and went away to the sepulchre ; it was then dark, but when she had arrived at the sepulchre the sun was rising. John says, " The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early when it was yet dark." He says, " cometh," he does not say, that she had come ; when she had come the sun was rising, but when she was coming it was yet dark. Ah, doctor, if you think to overthrow Christianity by nibbling at such things as this, you are sadly mistaken.

I have thus gone over all your objections. You cannot say that I have omitted one single objection. I have defended every point you have attacked ; and while I have done so, I have also shewn you, that even though much that I have defended were indefensible, still Christianity would shew itself that religion, against which, founded as it is on a rock, the gates of hell cannot prevail. I submit my observations to your candor, trusting that you will read them with candor and with a sincere and earnest love of truth, and not of victory.

SATURDAY, MARCH 21, 1829.

Liberal principles.—The following extracts of letters, recently received, will shew that liberal principles continue to advance in the western part of this state.

Utica, March 3d, 1829.

The orthodox are considerably alarmed at our proceedings. They have had an extra fast, and, as far as I can learn, the rapid advance of liberal sentiments, formed the burden of their song. It would amuse you to go to our churches on Sunday, to hear the priests rate out against our sentiments, and work themselves into a fret, because we do not keep our opinions to ourselves. They appear to know that it is impolitic for them to meddle with the subject, but can not let it alone. I know some that probably would never have heard of liberal principles, had not their curiosity been excited so much by the eternal ding-dong of the priests, as to cause them to look into the subject and are now freemen. It does not, I admit, produce the same effect on all ; for instance, a lady had some " Liberal Tracts" reading, and on going out of her room, left them on her mantle piece ; another coming in who had heard so much against them, took them carefully up with the *tongs* and put them in the fire. But we can have no objection that they rail on, for they are something in the situation of a fly in a spider's web ; the more fuss they make, the worse they are off.

There was a trial which created some interest here a few weeks since. A lady prosecuted the agent of the pioneer line of stages, for putting her on board of the " pioneer," instead of " the telegraph," (the stage that carries the mail, and only six passengers, belonging to the old line.) As she got in during the night, she had rode some distance before she found that she was on board the " pioneer." She then ordered her baggage off ; came back, prosecuted the agent, and recovered sixteen dollars and costs.

Syracuse, Feb. 24th, 1829.

So far am I from despairing of success in our efforts to liberalize our neighbors, that I perhaps feel too sanguine that the period is not far distant, when exertions on our part will cease to be necessary. The misanthropic

christians have met with such signal defeats in their schemes for controlling the actions of others, that they must but feel disheartened, while we are encouraged to "hold fast the faith." We know their untiring zeal, but when that zeal is fed and kept alive by money, and that money gathered by their incessant begging of farthings, we may hope, by disgusting the community with our exposures of their prodigality, the contributions will be withheld, and the zeal cooled, so that reason may be listened to. By overacting, they have brought into action a class of substantial citizens who, but for that, would have remained silent, and still have contributed to the support of the church.

The managers of our "anti-pioneer" public meetings, have been generally selected from the presbyterian ranks, and although not avowed, with a view to convince the *saints* that we had our friends in their own household. The day that it becomes *unpopular* for a man to shelter himself under the wing of the church, may be counted as our final victory. Our religious societies, *one and all* would be overthrown in a year, were they to depend upon the elect COMMUNICANTS alone for support. A trifling examination of the condition of their societies, will show that a very great proportion of their support is drawn from men who are indifferent in their feelings, and are held to them by the motives of *fear of giving offence and of losing patronage*. The course I adopt, and the one I intend to act upon, is not to permit the priests in my village to preach their anathematising sermons in their pulpits with impunity. We have too long been the victims of their pious slanders, and they have been too long permitted to indulge in them. I have no pulpit, and am not permitted to refute their dogmas in the presence of the same audience. My defence is the *press*; and the only means by which I can reach them; so effectually it operates, that a philosopher, yes, a philosopher in religion can now walk the streets without the fear of being pointed at as a son of the devil. I care not how much they preach, and picture the beauties of their peculiar views of religion, provided they do not do it at the expense of the peace and good order of society. So much are they accustomed to indiscriminate defamation of all who differ in opinion, that they are not aware of the discord and mischief they produce. It is notorious in our village, that the evening parties and little social circles, are made up almost exclusively of individuals of the particular sect to which the *hostess* belongs; thus we see the presbyterians in one, the baptists in another, the methodists in a third; and but very little promiscuous intercourse among the sects. We know that those most celebrated for liberality of sentiment, and charity for the opinions of others, are those who have seen and associated the most with mankind, without reference to who they are or whence they came; and those distinguished for their narrow and selfish views are invariably such as have seen the world at home. At this time our priests are rather sociably inclined, whether it be from a conviction of the good policy of being so, or from higher and better motives, I care not; the fact is what pleases me. Two years ago it would have been an enormity to see a Christian priest and a *materialist* in social converse.

Perhaps, you, like myself, would be surprised to see a man boldly, and in a mixed society, assert his total disbelief in a God and a future

state, and then exhibit his reasons for such disbelief; but such is frequently the case with me, and nobody's hair stands on end; neither, do they affect to fear an instant and special judgment on my head for so much wickedness.

It is an undeniable truth that the old institutions of society are undergoing a thorough investigation; the spur was first given by the natural sciences, and religion, and education, and masonry, all have their respective investigators, who are daily exposing their abuses. The abuses in government were investigated before my birth, and I am cheered with the hope that all others will be equally so while I live. Once do away with the Sabbath, and the priests must either labor or beg.

MISCELLANEOUS.

MASSACRE OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW.

Concluded from page 128.

The storm of persecution broke tremendously upon Lyons; the governor of which, Mandelot, pretended to save the huguonots by committing them to prison: but many were murdered on their way thither. He even pretended horror at the queen's orders, and by entreating the populace to wait instructions from the king, induced the huguonots to leave their hiding places and confide in him; and he put them into various prisons as for safety. A wretch, called Peter, now made his appearance with a verbal authority from the king and queen for universal massacre, when the impious governor exclaimed, "I must say to you, as Christ said to your namesake, "whatever you bind shall be bound, and whatever you loose shall be loosed:" the populace were then set on. The garrison, however, resented the idea of being made assassins, and even the common hangman refused so despicable a part. Three hundred of the chief huguonots were murdered by the train-bands, in the Archbishop's palace. The huguonots in the jail were half hung and then thrown into the Rhone. Mandelot, offended by the sight of the corpses in the archiepiscopal courtyard, ordered them to be buried in a monastery on the opposite side of the river. The monks, considering them unworthy of sepulture, would not receive them; they were, therefore, tumbled into the river, the fattest only being reserved for a purpose scarcely credible. Lyons had the honor of murdering eight hundred protestants on this memorable occasion: Thoulouse two hundred: Rouen delayed its task till the middle of September, when the victims were called, each by name, out of the prison, and deliberately put to death; and, on the two succeeding days, the slaughter was promiscuous, of about five hundred, whose bodies were first stripped of their clothes and then thrown into a hole. The blood-stained garments were afterwards distributed as a charitable offering to the poor! In short, not less than thirty thousand protestants, victims to Roman catholic toleration and mildness, appear to have been sacrificed, in the whole, by these relentless bigots!

One might reasonably suppose, that Rome would express her joy on this triumphant occasion, but De Thou remarks, "it was wonderful how much she rejoiced!" The Cardinal of Lorraine, who then resided at Rome, rewarded the courier who brought the welcome news by a present of a thousand crowns. This messenger was the bearer also of the Admi-

ral's head, but whether as a present to the Cardinal of Lorraine, the pope, the Cardinals, or to all of them, is not known. Masses were immediately said in the different churches on the joyous event, and a high mass and jubilee proclaimed on the Monday following in the church of St. Louis.

The church was most superbly decorated, and on its folding doors, the Cardinal of Lorraine, who was to celebrate mass, placed this inscription, "Charles IX. the most Christian king of France, thanks the good God and congratulates his holiness Gregory XII. the Sacred Senate of Cardinals, and the people of Rome, on the astonishing and incredible fruits of their counsels given, aids sent, and vows preferred to heaven, during twelve years." Mass concluded, Gregory pronounced remission of sins through the Christian world to every soul, devoutly rejoicing at the destruction of thirty thousand protestants! This pope too was infallible! The usual demonstrations of public joy, such as bonfires, discharges of cannon and fireworks, and ringing of bells, followed of course.

Gregory was not satisfied with felicitating Charles on this triumph, by a letter under his own infallible hand; but to add strength to his argument, he dispatched a legate with the golden crucifix to enforce his admonitions by parade and studied eloquence. Charles's murderous fever had however now cooled, and the revocation of his destructive edicts damped the reception on which his papal holiness had so fully relied. In fact, at the moment of the legate's arrival, Charles was urging his emissaries, in every direction, diligently to extenuate the flagrant enormity of those acts which he could no more contemplate without horror. The pope, at least, could only see in all which had been done, the victory of his own peculiarly mild religion, and therefore, to retain in sacred perpetuity the most material scenes of the massacre, they were painted about the great hall of the Lateran palace, and even sculptured in marble; nay farther, the execrable picture of the Admiral thrown from a window, was one of the ornaments of his holiness's own private chapel, with the following inscription at the bottom, "*Pontifex Colinu necem probat,*" in English, the pope approves of Coligny's murder!

The pope's legate returning abruptly from France, Charles deemed it expedient to pay a similar compliment to the Roman pontiff, and, accordingly, he sent, on this mission, Minet a professor of Belles lettres, who disgraced his learning and genius by pronouncing a studied oration in praise of this infernal transaction; and which was, of course, well received, by the personage to whom it was addressed.

Philip II. of Spain, it may easily be conceived, received the account of the extension of this massacre throughout France, with every demonstration of pleasure. He had, four years before, sent the duke of Alva to depopulate the Netherlands, because that people was reluctant to admit, and to kiss the rod of that hellish court the Inquisition—a worthy engine of popery. Philip could not be expected to conceal his impious joy on this notable occasion, as it dissipated every doubt of the strict adherence of Charles and Catharine to the holy league, formed, or confirmed, at Bayonne. In fact, he instantly transmitted the news to the Admiral of Castile, and the courier, on his arrival at the gates, proclaimed "news! news! good news!! All the Lutherans, at least all the principal ones, are dead and slain in Paris, three days ago."

Charles's affairs went on, as we have seen, swimmingly with the popish courts, but it next became necessary for him to turn his attention to the protestant powers, which felt very differently in regard to his infamous and bloody treason, and where the French residents had already been subject to public affronts from the people. It was consequently resolved, as the sole alternative, to transmit copies of the mock sentence of the parliament of Paris, against the Admiral and his martyred brethren, and the most able negotiators were selected for this important purpose, with instructions to spare no means, however disgraceful, to carry their point. It is unnecessary to trace all the disgusting falsehoods which were resorted to, by blackening the protestants, to wash out the stains of their popish butchers: time might blunt the edge of resentment, but faithful memory and authentic records will never consign the act to absolute oblivion.

The Elector-palatine, Frederic III., a zealous protestant, adopting the example of pope Gregory XIII., employed painting to convey an useful lesson to one of the great actors in this tragedy. The duke of Anjou, passing through Heidelberg, in 1573, to take possession of the throne of Poland, to which he had just been elected, was entertained by Frederic, who, among other curiosities, pointed out certain historical pictures in the electoral palace, asking, "Does your majesty know the persons pourtrayed?" Henry, who could probably discover his own portrait in many flagrant attitudes of murder, effected to regard them slightly, but the elector, with deep-fetched sighs, angrily continued, "Their murderers are the persons to be lamented for their unhappiness: the murdered were all great men and good officers!" Henry miserably answered, "They were very capable of doing good if they would—" and hastened to turn the subject, to which the blunt Frederic, however, sternly reverted.

Free Press Association.—The meetings of the Association are now held in the Bowery Long Room, opposite the Theatre; where a lecture will be delivered to-morrow (Sunday) afternoon, at 3 o'clock, *in defence of the manner in which liberal principles have been advocated by the Free Press Association*—By Mr. Offen.

In the evening, at half-past 6 o'clock, the following question will be debated:—*Did ever such a person as Jesus Christ exist?*

Tickets of admission to the debate, (to be had at the door) three cents each. Ladies free.

To Correspondents—Several letters from valuable correspondents, are now lying unanswered, owing to the illness of the editor, who has been for several weeks unable to attend to business. He is now recovering, and when sufficiently well, his friends may rely on their communications receiving due attention.

GEORGE HOUSTON, JR., Printer, No. 6 William-street, New-York. Book and Job Printing of every description.